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***NEWS From:***

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**Congressman Mike Honda**

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**FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA**

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## **Rep. Honda: SARS Quarantine at San Jose Airport Latest Example of Need to Fund First Responders for Homeland Security**

WASHINGTON, April 1, 2003 — Rep. Mike Honda (D-San Jose) released the following statement regarding the quarantine of an airplane at San Jose International Airport:

“Today, officials at San Jose International Airport quarantined an airplane because five persons reported feeling symptoms of the SARS illness. This sensitive operation required the cooperation of many including the Santa Clara County Public Health Department, the San Jose International Airport Officials, the San Jose Police Department, and the San Jose Fire Department. This multi-agency effort is an example of the cooperation needed by first responders (i.e. firefighters, police officers, and health officials), in the defense of our public health and homeland security. If other unexpected emergencies had occurred at the same time, would these first responders have had the resources to fully respond? It is imperative for the federal government to adequately fund first responders. But today, the Republicans voted down an amendment to fund homeland security and first responders.

“Following September 11<sup>th</sup>, Santa Clara County allocated \$5 million for a variety of security-related needs. This funding was allocated with the expectation that the County would not only be reimbursed, but that new dollars would follow for essential purposes such as equipment, training, and medical preparedness for law enforcement officials, firefighters, and public health personnel. Timely and adequate federal funding for first responders is essential.

“Today, House Republicans voted down a \$2.5 billion Democratic homeland security amendment to the War Supplemental that would have moved closer to fulfilling the security requests made by the Bush administration. The amendment, sponsored by U.S. Rep. David Obey (D-WI),

Ranking Member of the Appropriations Committee, was voted down on a straight party line vote of 28-35. This Democratic amendment would have added funds for port, nuclear, border and other homeland security needs, as well as \$300 million for first responders, of which \$23.9 million was for California alone.

“We must remember that funding for medical personnel and public health is essential to our homeland security preparedness. Today, half of the Santa Clara County’s Tuberculosis Control clinic was working on the quarantine at the airport, instead of working to stop the spreading of tuberculosis. It is clear that with the drastic budget outlooks for state and local governments, our first responders are running at bare bones operations, and are need of federal funds.

“In addition, the Bush budget for fiscal year 2004 cuts CDC funding by 7.4% or \$334 million below the level needed to maintain purchasing power at the 2002 level. The CDC is the main federal agency that works to address and prevent the SARS outbreak.”